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Monday, 24 January 2000, 3.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Holbrooke	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Axworthy
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Josselin
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Mohammad Kamal
	Mali	Mr. Sokona
	Namibia	Mr. Gurirab
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hain

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

00-25720 (E)

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The meeting was resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President: The first speaker on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Her Excellency Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

I welcome the Minister as the representative of the great nation of South Africa and thank her for participating in today's important meeting. I know that Secretary of State Albright deeply regrets that we were unable to hear Ms. Dlamini-Zuma's statement before lunch.

Ms. Dlamini-Zuma (South Africa): It is an honour for me to address this important meeting of the Security Council on the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to thank the presidency of the United States for devoting this month to African issues. I am particularly glad to be here, representing President Mbeki, in the presence of many heads of State from our region.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a most complex problem, involving six States and various rebel movements in our region. It is indeed a tribute to the leaders of our region, under the leadership of President Chiluba, that the Lusaka Agreement was reached, providing the best opportunity for a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We still believe that there is no option for resolving of the conflict other than working within the framework which the parties, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) decided upon when they signed the Lusaka Agreement.

The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement must be successfully implemented by all concerned. It is a tribute to the signatories that, although the Ceasefire Agreement has not been fully implemented in terms of all the provisions, and there have been some breaches of it, total war has not continued in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This demonstrates the commitment to the ceasefire and to peace in the region of the Great Lakes.

South Africa would like to reaffirm its neutral role in the search for lasting peace in the Congo and in the Great Lakes area. We believe that it is important for our country to communicate equally with all parties involved in the Congo conflict. Furthermore, my Government is committed to assisting the Joint Military Commission (JMC) by providing whatever support is needed, including logistical support.

We strongly urge an immediate and complete deployment of the JMC to enable it to undertake the tasks prescribed by the Agreement as soon as possible. We would like to take this opportunity to request the international community to give its full support to the JMC in the implementation of its tasks in accordance with the Ceasefire Agreement. We appreciate the assistance given by many countries so far, but more needs to be done.

Further, my delegation would like to reiterate the call, made by the SADC heads of State and Government in Maputo, that the Security Council should without delay authorize the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the context of the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. South Africa believes that the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force is critical to a successful implementation of the Agreement and needs the support of the international community. In this connection, States members of the Security Council need not be reminded of the provisions contained in Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, which states that the United Nations Member States confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. A delay by the Security Council in carrying out its fundamental duty may lead to the worsening of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

South Africa finds unacceptable the delay in the involvement of the United Nations in bringing about security, lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Let us recall that, on 10 July 1999, all parties to the conflict demonstrated their desire for peace by signing the Agreement. Therefore, the Security Council must, on its part, fulfil its historic mandate, as set out in the United Nations Charter, by assisting the parties to the Agreement to enforce the ceasefire.

We do hope that the United Nations will be able to play the role envisaged in chapter 8 of the Agreement, which includes all peacekeeping and peace enforcement. In this regard, we welcome the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but we must state that we see the deployment recommended in that report as only the beginning.

We believe it is important to implement the ceasefire as it is envisaged in the Agreement, including disarming and resettling the armed groups that further compromise the security of the countries in the region. It is for this reason that we believe that, as a minimum requirement, the Security Council should conclude this week devoted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo by adopting a resolution in support of the peace process in that country, as detailed in the Lusaka Agreement.

My Government also welcomes the appointment by the Congolese parties of the former President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, as the Facilitator for the internal political national dialogue between the political forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with chapter 5 of the Agreement.

In this regard, we call on all the Congolese political and other interest groups to give their full support to Sir Ketumile Masire in his endeavour to assist in the creation of a more democratic political system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the long run, it is only the Congolese themselves who can determine their future, while the international community can assist in creating a conducive atmosphere to underpin the Congolese commitment. We also join the heads of State in appealing to the international community to support the Congolese dialogue both financially and politically.

In this regard, we wish to reaffirm the importance of the collective involvement of the United Nations, the OAU, SADC and the international community in the search for a lasting solution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region. We strongly believe that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, a product of the African countries, will make a meaningful contribution towards resolving the conflict and place the Great Lakes region on the road to recovery.

We would like to appeal to the international community for urgent humanitarian support to alleviate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Congolese. The Democratic Republic of the Congo will also need extensive resources for its process of reconstruction and development. Planning in this regard should commence as soon as possible.

The people of the Congo have suffered for over a century. This process provides them with a glimmer of hope towards a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Congo. Should this process fail, we shall all stand indicted. We owe it to the people of the Congo and we dare not fail them.

The President: I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa for coming here and representing President Mbeki. I thank her for her kind words addressed to the American presidency and I thank her for her country's contribution to peace.

I have been asked to read out a message addressed to me from the President of Nigeria:

> "On behalf of the Government and the people of Nigeria, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council during the first month of the new millennium and for the high profile and attention which you have given to African issues in our Organization. To this end, I am delighted to send this message of goodwill to members of the Council and participants in this historic open meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including my brother heads of State who have travelled all the way from our continent, for a very successful deliberation. Their presence demonstrates the commitment which the Organization of African Unity and all African leaders have towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
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> "It is gratifying that the United Nations Security Council, under the presidency of the United States, at the very beginning of the new millennium is devoting a substantial portion of its work and time to the issues of peace and security in Africa. It is appropriate and fitting that the United Nations is taking an early lead in the new millennium in focusing on issues of peace and security on the African continent.
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> "The impressive turnout of a large number of African leaders in the Council today to participate in the efforts at resolving the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a solid show of the commitment of African leaders to truly turn 2000 into a year of peace, security and solidarity. Certainly, their presence should convince the international community that we are committed to ending conflicts afflicting some States on our continent.
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> "The early resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will certainly

have a positive effect on the security of the entire subregion and give substance to the decision of African leaders at their 1999 Algiers summit to make 2000 truly the year of peace, security and solidarity. It is important, therefore, that all efforts be made at this meeting to reaffirm the collective commitment of all parties to the Lusaka Agreement. The United Nations should also give concrete support to complement the regional and continental arrangement aimed at peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"With best wishes for a successful deliberation,

"Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

I would like to invite the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Mr. Louis Michel, to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement. We thank him for making the trip to join us today.

Mr. Michel (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I am very happy to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting, and I would like to thank you for your efforts to lend new momentum to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to make the international community more aware of the gravity of this crisis. I encourage your initiative and assure you of my country's support.

Belgium's position lies within the framework of the efforts made by the European Union, and I associate myself fully with the statement to be made by the Portuguese presidency of the Union. My Government believes that European involvement in the peace process and in the stabilization of the region is an essential factor in ensuring the success of our efforts.

During the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, on 25 September 1999, I announced that Belgium wished to devote special attention to central Africa and to solving the crisis in the Congo. We wish to contribute to pulling the region out of the quagmire of war and insecurity, and thereby out of underdevelopment. My presence here today is further confirmation of that commitment.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a country the size of a continent, and its stability influences that of the entire African continent and impacts directly on the stability of its nine neighbours. The return to peace and regional stability requires the re-establishment of respect for the fundamental principles that were clearly reaffirmed by the signatories to the Lusaka peace Agreement. First and foremost among those is the territorial unity and integrity of Congo and the inviolability of its borders. For Belgium, this is the first prerequisite for the country's recovery.

At the same time, Congo's neighbours have the right to live in peace within secure borders, without destabilizing action being undertaken from Congolese territory.

The other essential factor to the stabilization of Congo is of a domestic character, namely, national reconciliation. The Lusaka Agreement explicitly sets out the commitment of the Congolese signatories to undertake an internal dialogue leading to national reconciliation within the framework of freely accepted institutions, including a national army truly at the service of the Congolese people.

We have not gathered here today at such a high level of political representation to negotiate a new treaty; rather, we are gathered to create an unstoppable momentum that will lead to full implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. Although it entered into force almost six months ago, today we are seeing a slow pace of implementation and the risk that the peace process may become more fragile. We cannot remain passive.

All parties involved — signatories to the Agreement and the international community, both collectively and individually — must shoulder their responsibilities. The gravity of the situation and its catastrophic humanitarian consequences require more than ever that everything be done to relaunch the peace process by setting into motion the mechanisms already envisaged in the Agreement. Indeed, this is the only instrument that exists to end the conflict.

Now, what do we think are the conditions for resuming the peace process and ensuring its success?

First, of course, is the political will of the signatories. The primary responsibility for implementing the Lusaka Agreement lies with those who signed it. It is up to them to respect their own signatures and to carry out what they agreed to: respect for the ceasefire, the withdrawal of troops and a halt to rearmament. A clear demonstration of political will by the parties to implement

the peace Agreement in good faith and without creating impediments is absolutely essential to enable the international community to uphold and encourage their actions.

This naturally brings me to my second point, namely, the support of the international community. That support is absolutely necessary to make the Agreement's mechanisms work. Immediate financial and logistical assistance for the Joint Military Commission (JMC) so that it may function on a permanent basis is indispensable to its executing its mission. In this respect, the financial contributions pledged should be paid into the trust fund without delay. So far, Belgium has contributed BF10 million and has actively encouraged the European Union to pledge 1.2 million euros without delay.

Better coordination between the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the JMC and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is also needed. Here I welcome the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General, particularly his appointment of an especially experienced Special Representative, Ambassador Morjane, who should be able to count on the political and logistical support of the international community, as well as the full cooperation of the parties.

The third prerequisite is a peacekeeping operation to help the signatories put the Agreement into practice and allow it to achieve one of its principal objectives, namely, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Congo. In order to succeed, such a mission will have to be adequately equipped with a clear mandate and the necessary logistical and financial resources. I urge the Security Council to seize the opportunity offered by the Lusaka Agreement and shoulder its responsibilities in this respect. Belgium will contribute financially and logistically in its national capacity and in conjunction with its partners in the European Union.

I would also urge the Security Council to provide sufficient protection and means of transportation and communications so that the observers to be deployed under phase II can carry out their mission objectively and under full security.

The issue of the disarmament and reintegration of combatants of irregular armed groups is clearly of the utmost importance, and it is also extremely difficult. This will require political mechanisms and economic incentives, rather than military solutions.

A fourth prerequisite is the inter-Congolese dialogue. Its implementation is essential and urgent. President Masire has now been appointed as facilitator and will bring his prestige as a great statesman, as well as his long political experience, to this indispensable dialogue. Belgium welcomes his appointment and will support him fully. I call on all Congolese parties to build a political system involving all dynamic elements of the nation. The international community should not remain on the sidelines while the Congolese attempt to achieve this objective.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the concept of African ownership, which may recently have been a reason for withdrawing from Africa and which has now — through the Lusaka Agreement — demonstrated its relevancy. The Agreement is an African response to an African crisis. Insofar as the signatory countries truly commit themselves, the international community is ready to contribute to its implementation. African ownership can be neither rejection nor withdrawal. The concept must involve collaboration and partnership.

Our efforts should be seen in the framework of partnership with countries in central Africa. That partnership involves, first of all, the countries of the region itself. It is only through regional stabilization and cooperation beyond one's own borders that peace, ensured by the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, will be truly consolidated. On that basis, we are ready to rally our partners — both within the European Union and beyond — to a North-South partnership pact focusing on reconstruction, democracy and development. That pact would fall within the scope of a conference on stability and cooperation in the Great Lakes region, which could be organized once peace returns to the region.

Finally, I would hope that we would consider the lessons of the Carlsson report. Not only should we help Rwanda heal the wounds of the past, but we must also ensure that the errors committed in Rwanda are not repeated.

We want to break from the logic of war, a war which cannot be won by anyone. We must show those who think they can improve their lot only by taking up arms that there exists a peaceful alternative based on economic cooperation and development. My country possesses the will and the means to participate in this endeavour.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium for his participation today. I would just note in passing that with the exception of the presidency, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium is the thirteenth speaker and the first to speak from the European continent. I hope that is indicative of his last point, that this is the rest of world in support of an African solution, to use Secretary-General Salim Salim's phrase, an African solution to an African problem.

We now return to the continent of Africa. It is my honour to call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi, who was with us last week and is still available under the previous rule. We welcome him back for another meeting of the Security Council.

Mr. Ntahomvukiye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to commend the Security Council and the presidency of the United States for having included on the Council's agenda security issues of the countries of the Great Lakes subregion. The problem of security in this part of Africa is at the centre of Burundi's concerns, given the tension and the internal, cross-border and interrelated wars that develop there to the point of imperiling entire nations now for many years.

The Government of Burundi welcomes the opportunity offered to express its great hope that the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement will create a favourable climate for the process of peace and reconciliation undertaken in my country over the past three years. One of the causes of the resurgence of violence in recent months is rooted in the coalition of armed rebel groups that come and go in the subregion where militias and other armies have taken to the bush and continue their guerrilla activities.

I will not revert to the explanations already given here at the United Nations and elsewhere on Burundi's position in the war that is ravaging the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, I would like to recall that Burundi stands ready to make its contribution and to play its full role in implementing the Lusaka Agreement, which explicitly acknowledges its security concerns along its border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to the activity of part of the Burundi rebellion in that country.

More than in the various meetings in Kampala, Lusaka and Harare, Burundi requests to be particularly associated with the settlement of the following items identified in the Agreement: first, disarmament of armed groups, including the Forces for the Defence of Democracy of Burundi, as stipulated in chapter 8, article 8.2.2 and chapter 9 of the Agreement; secondly, the voluntary repatriation of Burundian and Congolese refugees, as stipulated in chapter 8, article 8.2.2; thirdly, reintegration into society of members of armed groups, as stipulated in chapter 8, article 8.2.2 of the Agreement; and fourthly, normalization of the situation along the common border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, as stipulated in chapter 12 of the Agreement.

In keeping with our traditional policy of good-neighbourliness, Burundi entirely endorses the measures recommended in chapter 12 of the Agreement. In this connection, it reaffirms its desire to cooperate with all signatories to the Agreement and other involved parties. Peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are indispensable to lasting peace in the subregion and in Burundi in particular.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi for his contribution to this week's and to last week's debate.

The next speaker is Ambassador Abdellatif Rahal of Algeria, personal representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Rahal (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I am addressing the Security Council on behalf of Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

I avail myself of this opportunity to welcome your initiative, Mr. President, under the presidency of your country, to focus the Security Council debates for the month of January on issues that are matters of great concern to the African continent. Moreover, the year 2000 was declared by the OAU summit at Algiers a year of peace, security and stability in Africa.

Your recent trip, Mr. President, to several countries in Africa, has enabled you to accurately assess the gravity of the situation. You were able to gather the opinions of the various parties *in situ* on ways and means of contributing to an effective implementation of the Lusaka peace Agreement.

At this meeting, I welcome the heads of State and high-ranking African political authorities who have been good enough to travel to demonstrate their interest in a satisfactory settlement of the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Our countries, and the OAU, understood full well the seriousness and complexity of this crisis. The countries of the region, which are naturally more sensitive than others to the threats it poses, have done a great deal to try to create the conditions for a peaceful settlement of this fratricidal crisis. Since the beginning of the crisis, Algeria has called for restraint and wisdom.

Encouraging results have come about with the signing of the Lusaka peace Agreement, which through dialogue and cooperation has created the heartening prospect of a final settlement of the conflict. All States members of the OAU, and the international community at large, have welcomed that significant progress towards the restoration of peace and harmony in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which enjoys unanimous moral support.

The thirty-fifth OAU summit, which was held at Algiers in July 1999, welcomed that progress and called upon the parties to the conflict to work harder to implement the Lusaka Agreement fully and genuinely. In our view, the Agreement constitutes an important achievement and remains the proper framework for settling the conflict and restoring peace and stability throughout the Great Lakes region.

As current Chairman of the OAU, Algeria has worked since the Algiers summit to implement the decisions adopted by African heads of State or Government. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has appointed a special envoy to follow the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the region. The efforts of the current Chairman of the OAU have three focuses. First, he is striving to encourage the initiatives of the countries of the subregion, and to urge the parties concerned to respect commitments undertaken in the framework of the Lusaka Agreement and to engage in frank and honest cooperation in its implementation. He has also worked with the countries of the region to overcome difficulties with respect to representation for rebel movements in the mechanisms envisioned in the peace Agreement.

Secondly, in coordination with the Secretary-General of the OAU, President Bouteflika has turned to all the countries of Africa with the purpose of strengthening their unanimous support for this endeavour and of creating support for implementation efforts. This made it possible to convene the OAU Central Organ of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which agreed to OAU financial support for the Joint Military Commission and to the deployment in the field of African monitors.

Thirdly, the Chairman of the OAU has endeavoured to make the international community more aware of this African peace effort. He has called upon all members of the international community to make a meaningful contribution to implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. Unfortunately, that appeal has met with meagre response, and we hope that this meeting of the Security Council, by highlighting the threat posed to all by the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will give rise to a more tangible commitment to an endeavour which lacks the means for its achievement.

Moreover, also in coordination with the Secretary-General of the OAU, President Bouteflika has been ceaselessly working with the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to creating the conditions for prompt and effective United Nations involvement in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. Thus far it has not been possible to obtain United Nations involvement commensurate with African expectations or with the challenge posed by the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But this is an urgent situation that genuinely threatens to spill over. Delay or hesitation in deploying a United Nations peacekeeping operation is of concern to the peoples of Africa, which need support from the international community to make the Lusaka peace process a success.

The presence at today's meeting of the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement is a sign of their readiness, of which we must take due note. Their presence attests to their desire to promote dialogue as the means towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

While it is true that progress to date has not met our expectations, the Lusaka Agreement still constitutes a valuable achievement that should be protected from any sudden challenges. It is the irreplaceable framework within which we must strive to solve the problems before us. The Agreement is intended to make yesterday's adversaries into partners determined to implement a peaceful solution, as shown by their cooperation with the Joint Military Commission, which was established following the signing of the Lusaka Agreement. All are aware of the important progress made by this Commission, which, however, continues to face enormous material and financial difficulties. We hope that the Commission, which has proven its effectiveness on the ground, will be encouraged to continue its work.

Some countries responded positively to the appeal of the current Chairman of the (OAU) and have given equipment or financial support to the Joint Military Commission. The Chairman of the OAU thanks them and urgently appeals to other countries who have not as yet not done so to also demonstrate their support for the Commission.

We deeply deplore the recent confrontations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have once again claimed civilian victims. These regrettable events fly in the face of the legitimate hopes of the Congolese people and of other people of the region who hope to regain peace in trust, harmony and as good neighbours.

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has exhorted the parties in conflict to abstain from resorting to arms and to work resolutely with the Joint Military Commission to create conditions for implementing the Lusaka Agreement. The Agreement is a structure built on a balance of interests and on a fair sharing of sacrifices. If it does not satisfy all, neither does it privilege any of the parties. All new recourse to arms will irreparably destroy the efforts for peace undertaken up to now.

The current Chairman of the OAU welcomes the designation of Sir Ketumile Masire, former President of Botswana, as facilitator for the inter-Congolese dialogue. His great qualities as a statesman, his extensive experience and his personal engagement will help the Congolese parties come together and find the elements of national reconciliation.

This is not the first time that the Security Council is considering the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since the first warning signs of the crisis, the Council understood the magnitude of the danger threatening all countries of the region. In several successive and repetitive resolutions, the Council called upon the parties to the conflict to settle their disputes by peaceful means and committed itself to provide them with military aid, equipment and financial support. Despite delays and hesitations in their progress, the African parties nonetheless responded to the appeal of the Security Council and, not without tremendous difficulties, arrived at the Lusaka Agreement.

Implementing this Agreement, as we said previously, requires ways and means that go beyond their own capabilities. For its part, the Security Council has only partially met its commitments by sending 79 liaison officers to the field. At other times and in other places, the Council has become involved far more energetically in the settlement of crises that threatened peace in other regions of the world. On those occasions, it made available considerable resources, even going to the extent of military action not without inevitable risks.

The African continent wishes to benefit from similar concern on the part of the international community. You wished to impart to this meeting of the Council an exceptional and solemn nature; it would be difficult to understand if the meeting did not lead to very firm commitments and if the actions and calendar for implementing them were not clearly defined. This is what we Africans expect of the United Nations, that is to say of the States of which it is made up, and particularly of those which have the equipment and the financial and military power.

The President: I would like to mention now that I will forego our space in the speakers order and not deliver a national statement today in the interests of time and to allow more people to speak. I would also like to note the return to the Chamber of President Mugabe of Zimbabwe — we welcome you back — and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Salim Salim. We are delighted that you were able to return.

I now call on the Minister of the Armed Forces of Mali, Mohamed Salia Sokona.

Mr. Sokona (Mali) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to speak here today in the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On behalf of His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of the Republic of Mali and current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and also on my own behalf, it is also my pleasure to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting, and I would like to tell you what great importance we attach to results of our work here.

The presence at this meeting of many heads of State, of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, ministers and many eminent persons gives testimony, if testimony is needed, to the importance that the international community attaches to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This situation is a critical one. It is characterized by, *inter alia*, a deterioration of the military situation, of security conditions and of the humanitarian situation as well as by human rights violations.

What is to be done? The Security Council and the international community must take swift and concrete action. In this connection, I should like to touch on several points that my delegation believes could contribute to a settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

First, Mali believes that stopping the fighting must be the top priority, for no military solution to the conflict can truly resolve the crisis. We call on all parties to the conflict to implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. They must be determined to respect the Agreement that they themselves signed. In the same context, we believe that the United Nations should support the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by swiftly deploying a peacekeeping operation with the appropriate mandate and resources.

Secondly, Mali believes that the establishment of a lasting peace and of stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo requires the implementation of a genuine process of national reconciliation among all of the Congolese people. In this connection, we welcome the appointment of Sir Ketumile Masire as the neutral facilitator for the inter-Congolese dialogue, and we assure him of our full support. With the help of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations, we will thus have grounds for hope that significant progress can be made in this matter.

Thirdly, it is Mali's view that a lasting settlement of the conflict requires the parties to make the necessary arrangements to guarantee the future security, stability and development of the region. The principles underlying such arrangements were set out in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 11 December 1998. They are: respect for the territorial integrity, political independence and national sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other States in the region; the orderly withdrawal of all foreign forces; the taking of the necessary steps to ensure security along the international borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the re-establishment of the authority of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the whole territory of the country; respect for human rights and humanitarian law; and, lastly, dealing with the question of refugees.

Fourthly, we believe that to help attain these objectives, the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is a welcome proposal, which Mali fully supports.

In conclusion, I should like to welcome the initiatives taken at the regional level by, *inter alia*, President Chiluba, President Bouteflika and President Mbeki in support of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to congratulate the American delegation for having taken the initiative of convening this meeting today.

The President: Mr. Minister, thank you for your participation, in fulfilment of a pledge your President made when I visited him last month in Bamako. We are delighted that you have joined us today. I thank you also for your very important remarks and for your leadership role in these problems.

It is now my very great honour to welcome and call on the Foreign Minister of Canada, The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy. We are delighted that he has made the long, difficult trip from Canada to New York.

Mr. Axworthy (Canada): I am very glad that we have been able to bring such warm weather from the Canadian North — Canadian weather.

I should also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your very fine initiative in convening this meeting. Canada welcomes this special Security Council meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we have been very encouraged by the very effective, strong and powerful presentations made by the United States Secretary of State, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the leaders of the African States, the members and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the facilitator. It has really been one of the very important consensus-building exercises that this Organization has been involved in.

We are glad to be here because this is an issue that involves us all. The conflict in the Congo jeopardizes regional peace. It certainly undermines the fragile prospects for stability in an African country that is very central to the continent's interests. But most importantly, it is senselessly taking many innocent lives and ending the hopes of countless others, and for that reason we must all shoulder our responsibilities.

(spoke in French)

A solution that creates lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is therefore imperative. Canada is hopeful that this gathering will bring progress.

As we focus on building a more promising future for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, we also need to be mindful of the sometimes disheartening past. Last month, the Independent Inquiry into the actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda published its findings.

(spoke in English)

As the President of Rwanda has reminded us, this report is a stinging portrait of failure in Africa by Members of this Organization, members of the Council and the United Nations Secretariat. It documents a failure to participate, anticipate and prepare; a failure to communicate; a failure to exert leadership and to commit resources — in short, an abysmal failure by the global community to act when the people of Rwanda most desperately needed our help.

I commend the Secretary-General for establishing this unprecedented inquiry and for acknowledging the role he and the United Nations Secretariat played in the tragedy.

But the burden of responsibility is spread wide. We — as the Security Council, as Member States and as individuals — would do well to take the Secretary-General's example and clearly acknowledge our own shortcomings in Rwanda.

However, retroactive *mea culpas* alone serve little purpose. We cannot undo the past, but we can learn from it and apply its lessons to the present.

The Inquiry highlights how terribly wrong things went in Rwanda, yet it also provides specific guidelines on how to prevent tragedies in the future. The Inquiry underlines how human security — the safety and protection of civilians — has become a central concern in modern armed conflict. In so doing, it underlines the need to integrate the human dimension into action on matters of war and peace.

The Inquiry reinforces the importance of African issues to the Security Council's activities and to Council credibility. It underlines how the Council neglects the continent at its peril and the appalling price Africans pay when the Council fails to act. It lays all of this out clearly, methodically and indelibly, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the Security Council henceforth to shrink from or ignore its obligation to support peace and security in Africa.

There are encouraging signs that the Council is learning from experience. I believe the deliberations on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that we have heard today are evidence that we are taking those obligations to heart.

It is true that there has been no lack of Council consideration of the armed conflicts that continue to beset parts of Africa, as well as a search for solutions. To this end, the Council's recent open debates on Africa have helped focus attention. But it is also true that thematic discussions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, on the abuse of small arms and light military weapons and on war-affected children are helping broaden the Council's awareness and inform its responses to the security challenges of the new century. They have served to highlight the specific impact in African war zones.

Beyond words and awareness there are also deeds. There is an increasing sense that, in Africa as elsewhere, the Council must lend its weight to ongoing peace efforts being made by others. In the Sudan, for example, the ongoing armed conflict is a serious concern that, beyond the glare of the media spotlight, continues to take a devastating toll. The Security Council should consider how it can support the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in its mediation efforts.

In Sierra Leone, the Security Council established a new Mission that is helping implement a fragile Peace Agreement and bring a measure of peace and security for the people of that country. For the first time, a United Nations peacekeeping operation's mandate specifically includes the protection of civilians. The Council is currently considering the expansion of this operation; the Secretary-General is making recommendations. It is now up to the Council members to demonstrate their willingness to match our professed concern with resources and resolutely endorse his plan.

In Angola, Canada has been working on practical ways to make the sanctions regime relating to the illicit trade in diamonds, weapons and petroleum more effective. These measures are aimed at bringing an end to the senseless civil conflict that has claimed so many lives. If accepted and successful, these new measures on

Angola might be applied to other conflicts, and we hope they will provide a model for constraining the market place of conflict.

All of this is progress: progress in concrete Council action in Africa and progress in making the advancement of human security an important focus of this activity. But it is tenuous progress. The Council's engagement needs to be reinforced and sustained. We must not shrink from doing what is needed. Too often, the Council is motivated by avoiding cost and evading risk. This cannot be the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The conflict and turbulence in the Democratic Republic reflect many of the realities of modern war. It is clearly a significant human security challenge, and it is one of the most complex conflicts facing the global community. The Council's active involvement is therefore indispensable.

The territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is contested by foreign military forces occupying vast swathes of its eastern provinces. Some domestic opposition forces have chosen military conflict over political means to contest national leadership. Dialogue on the country's future institutions and on the path to democracy is thwarted by both internal and external forces. An array of military groups and militias — armed, dangerous and acting with impunity — use Congolese territory to contest the Governments of many of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's neighbours.

The influence of the new war economies is significant. The Democratic Republic of the Congo's economic development languishes, with some of its rich endowment of resources shamelessly pilfered to support war-making.

Most important, ordinary people are suffering at an appalling and unacceptable level. Civilians are the principal victims of this violence. Tens of thousands have been uprooted from their homes. Thousands have been killed or maimed. Women and children suffer hugely.

(spoke in French)

There are, however, other equally important realities. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a nation, united in their commitment to maintaining the integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's territory and the security of its borders. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo desire peace, with open dialogue. They want a chance to establish democratic institutions and to have a representative Government in order to realize their aspirations for stability and economic and social development.

Today we have heard many of the leaders of African countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo express the same desire for peace, stability and a return to normality. They too want closure on these problems.

(spoke in English)

The elements of a solution, as we have heard today, are there. The Lusaka Agreement, signed last summer, is central to resolving the conflicts. It addresses the principal issues that need to be resolved: a ceasefire and disengagement of troops, a national political dialogue, the orderly withdrawal of all foreign forces, the disarmament of armed groups, the re-establishment of State administration and the creation of a framework for implementation of the accord that involves the United Nations.

The tools are there, but the momentum has stalled. Therefore, we strongly welcome the initiative of the United States in convening this meeting, its willingness to engage fully in efforts to resolve the conflict and its leadership in bringing the parties together here in New York.

The prospects for peace are tied primarily to the actions and decisions of those directly involved. The onus is clearly on them. As President Mandela said last week in the context of Burundi, no one can reach agreement but the parties themselves. His wise counsel rings equally true for those involved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the global community can and should now play an active role in reviving the peace process and in achieving the goals set by the Lusaka Agreement. The time has come for the international community to assume its share of the burden — not just African countries, but all of us. This should not be a responsibility to be contracted out to an ad hoc coalition; instead, it must be met by truly collective efforts, funded not as a charity case but by assessed contributions — in other words, through the United Nations Security Council and through a United Nations operation.

In the first instance, this means the early deployment of 500 United Nations observers, already agreed to by the Security Council last November. They will need to be supported with a clear mandate and adequate resources. To that end, Canada supports the immediate creation of

a robust United Nations mission along the lines proposed by the Secretary-General to assist in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, and whose mandate should include clear and unequivocal provision for the protection of civilians under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The Joint Military Commission (JMC) plays a central part in ensuring that the Lusaka Agreement is respected. Canada will contribute $500,000 to the operation of the JMC. We expect that the JMC and the United Nations peacekeeping presence will work hand in hand in the full implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. I can say to the Secretary-General that our contribution will be delivered immediately.

Canada has been and will continue to help in other ways. We believe our most useful contribution, in addition to support for United Nations efforts, is in supporting the inter-Congolese dialogue, as well as the institutional development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, we have already been actively involved in efforts to promote reconciliation and peace. Canada has in the past supported projects emphasizing conflict prevention through the promotion of human rights, increasing popular participation in decision-making and encouraging good economic management.

Canada will reinforce these efforts. In the coming months, we will provide $2 million to support the peace and reconciliation process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region. One million dollars will be earmarked for the inter-Congolese dialogue, led by Sir Ketumile Masire at the request of Secretary-General Salim Salim of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The serious, indeed tragic, problem of child soldiers demands particular attention. Last year, Canada contributed to the organization of the Kinshasa Forum on the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Further concrete actions aimed at helping war-affected children are important in order to consolidate peace efforts. To that end, Canada will contribute $1 million to help with disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration, including to the Democratic Republic of the Congo National Commission on Child Soldiers.

The regional conference on war-affected children to be held this April in Accra, hosted by Ghana and Canada, will consider other concrete measures with relevance to West Africa, and undoubtedly to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes situation. It is our aim that the lessons learned from these initiatives will be shared and built upon at a global conference to be hosted by Canada next September on the broad question of war and children.

Since its nadir, so vividly recalled in the Rwanda Inquiry report, the Security Council has been making headway in being more actively involved in Africa. There is hope that in this instance the past is not prologue.

(spoke in French)

More resolute engagement in promoting peace and security in Africa; increased understanding of the need to relaunch an approach that links Council action with other efforts; recognition that a more human-centred approach to security challenges is needed in Africa — these are all positive trends.

(spoke in English)

This week's meetings on the Democratic Republic of the Congo are further and welcome evidence of Security Council commitment to these ends, to which Canadians are fully dedicated in their support.

The President: The next two speakers will be the representatives of the United Kingdom and France, at the ministerial level. As I said earlier, the United States will forgo its national statement, and we will then have completed the ministerial statements at this meeting. I will call on the permanent representatives who wish to take the floor. Because of the tremendous time limits, the very large number of representatives who wish to speak and the absolute need, because of the pressing obligations of all the heads of Government here, to suspend the meeting today at 5 p.m. or, perhaps, a few minutes afterwards, I urge everyone to speak very briefly.

It is now my great pleasure to welcome back to the Council one of the two men — the other is Sir Jeremy Greenstock — who presided over the Council last month in our seminal discussions of African issues during the presidency of the United Kingdom: the Minster of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Mr. Peter Hain.

Mr. Hain (United Kingdom): I am delighted to be here. I should like to thank Secretary of State Albright, and you, Mr. President, both for convening this debate and for your energetic pursuit of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also welcome the historic

statements made by the all the heads of State gathered here today.

Bringing peace to the Great Lakes region matters to Britain. It matters to the United Nations, and most of all it matters to Africa. We must end this war. We must bring peace to a region too often torn apart by strife. We, the United Nations — all of us — have failed Africa in the past. Let us not fail now.

The Lusaka Agreement is a good one. It provides the right formula for peace. It is Africa's agreement, an African success that we should back. It is the only solution. So I welcome what we have heard today from the African heads of State. Every one of them has reaffirmed his support for Lusaka and its principles and his commitment to its implementation. This is a strong foundation on which we can now build.

There has been some progress in implementing Lusaka. President Chiluba was right to remind us just how much has already been achieved. I should like to say to President Chiluba that I normally have to apologize for the British weather; now I find that I also have to apologize for the British flu. The mechanisms to oversee implementation are being put in place. Some observers have been deployed.

But I agree with President Chissano of Mozambique that progress has been too slow. Fighting is continuing and the national dialogue has yet to get under way. There has been no planning for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR). The Lusaka timetable has slipped. We need an updated and realistic timetable, with targets and benchmarks against which progress can be measured that can form the basis of a partnership between the African parties and the international community. I welcome the work done in Harare to take this forward.

The national dialogue is crucial to the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people. We are delighted that former President Masire has agreed to facilitate the talks, and I hope that a date will be set now for the start of the dialogue. I welcome President Kabila's affirmation today of his readiness to begin that dialogue immediately. I also welcome his commitment to see this process lead to free and fair elections and lasting national reconciliation. I call on all Congolese to engage constructively, wholeheartedly and without preconditions. Former President Masire underlined the need for resources to assist the dialogue. Britain is providing funding. We are prepared to consider further support.

We must move forward on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the militia groups. Without a credible DDR plan, Lusaka will fail. We should now agree on a set of political principles to underpin disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. These should include ending support for all non-state militias; the peaceful reintegration of those fighters from neighbouring States into their countries of origin — except for those accused of genocide, who should face justice — and arrangements to achieve this which are as far as possible cooperative and voluntary; the provision for collective action by the parties — if this ultimately proves necessary — to compel militia members who refuse voluntarily to disarm and disband to do so; and international monitoring to give all sides the reassurance they need to make the process work.

I hope that this week — in the next few days — we can agree on a way forward on DDR based on these principles. If so, we should invite the Joint Military Commission (JMC), the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the World Bank to take these principles forward and, in discussion with the parties, produce a viable and fully worked out DDR plan.

Next, we need to ensure that the mechanisms established by Lusaka to monitor and implement the ceasefire and eventual troop withdrawal work better. Those charged with overseeing this — the JMC, the Political Committee, the OAU and the United Nations — have a crucial part to play. We welcome what they have done so far. We encourage them to work still more closely together to drive the peace process forward. They need to exercise leadership and to hold the parties accountable for their actions.

As President Chiluba has reminded us, Lusaka's implementation mechanisms will work properly only if they are properly resourced. Britain has already provided funding to the JMC. We welcome the announcement of further support made by Canada today. Britain has provided personnel to the United Nations, who are now working closely with the JMC. More resources will be needed. We are looking at what more we may be able to do. We encourage others to do so, not least those in Europe.

I agree with President Chissano of Mozambique that we must address the humanitarian situation urgently. It is deteriorating, and there is growing hardship. We are willing to help, but we cannot get to all of those most in need. There must be access for non-governmental

organizations and United Nations agencies to make the assessments that we all need to be able to provide assistance. I call on those concerned to make those pledges here today and over the coming few days of negotiations.

It is absolutely crucial for us to agree on the next phase of a United Nations mission — what it should do and what support it should have. We agree with the Secretary-General that the next stage of the United Nations mission should be to deploy a force to monitor the ceasefire and the redeployment of troops to defensive positions. It needs adequate protection and the right logistical support. And it needs to be on the ground as soon as possible.

We should also reaffirm now our readiness to support, as soon as conditions allow, a full United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is time to bury the ghosts of the past and to ensure an effective United Nations peacekeeping operation. As President Museveni said, the cost of action is high, but the cost of inaction is higher still.

But let us be clear on the mandate. I understand why President Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Museveni of Uganda insist that there will need to be Chapter VII authority. I also agree with President Bizimungu of Rwanda that a new Security Council resolution is urgently required. We need a force that will help the parties themselves to implement the Lusaka Agreement, a force that can do so provided that all the parties continue to show the same political commitment to the Agreement that their leaders have shown today — a force which will have guarantees of security and cooperation from all concerned. I welcome President Kabila's important commitments today in this regard, and those from all the other African heads of State directly involved.

The heads of State have all called for urgent United Nations deployment. President Chiluba rightly said this morning that there is no peacekeeping that does not have some element of risk. I agree with him. But those risks must be minimized, not just to protect individual United Nations personnel, of whom we have lost too many in recent years, but also to sustain the international momentum behind the implementation of Lusaka. The factors which maximize the prospects for success — political determination and effective organization — also serve to minimize risk. Energetic commitment to Lusaka and a speedy, well-executed United Nations peacekeeping operation therefore go hand in hand.

Last, we must keep the Democratic Republic of the Congo high on the international agenda. As President Mugabe so correctly underlined, there must be no marginalization or segregation of this and Africa's other challenges.

President Dos Santos's important contribution to the debate reminds us of the terrible neglect of another African conflict. We must make United Nations sanctions against UNITA bite and bite now and we support Ambassador Fowler's excellent work to achieve this.

But the Congo crisis is now the major challenge facing Africa and one of the biggest challenges facing the United Nations and the international community. Britain will back all those determined to make the Lusaka Agreement work: with finance, practical help, people on the ground and political support.

The Secretary-General told the heads of State this morning that this is their opportunity to serve the African people and to enlist international support here today. What all speakers have said today has done both. Britain will stand with those leaders of Africa who are the peacemakers of Africa. Let us go forward together in partnership.

The President: I hope the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom will be with us for the rest of the week as we continue our deliberations.

I am delighted that the Minister Delegate for Cooperation and Francophonie of France is with us. I know he has just returned from a trip to Africa of great importance.

Mr. Josselin (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank the presidency of the Security Council for having taken the initiative of convening this open meeting of the Council on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While the international community is well aware of the gravity of the crisis and of its important implications for the peace, stability and development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, it must now fully assume its responsibilities and strongly support the process begun with the signing of the Lusaka Agreement. For its part, France stands ready.

The Lusaka Agreement, the basis of a negotiated solution agreed by all the parties, is today the sole

complete consensual instrument that can lead to the restoration of peace. Although it has encountered certain problems and is not running according to the very ambitious timetable set by the signatories, the implementation of the Agreement has begun. The Political Committee and the Joint Military Commission, the keystones of the Agreement, have been established. They are meeting regularly and have taken important decisions on both their own internal organization and on how to monitor the implementation of the Agreement.

Although unacceptable ceasefire violations — particularly those occurring in recent weeks — are to be deplored, the overall military situation has stabilized. The international community — particularly the United Nations, through the creation of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the announcement of an imminent peacekeeping operation — the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the European Union have all rapidly committed themselves to supporting the process, thus lending it additional credibility and legitimacy.

We must recognize that the implementation of this Agreement has been too slow — as many speakers this morning emphasized — due certainly to a lack of trust and cooperation among the signatories and because a certain number of elements remain to be clarified or investigated further before all the belligerents are fully convinced that this is the right approach, *inter alia*, to ensuring their own security.

The absence at this point of an international system to monitor implementation of the Agreement — due to a lack of resources for the Joint Military Commission and to the delay in deploying United Nations personnel — regrettably encourages further ceasefire violations that threaten at any moment to reignite the conflict.

The host of unacceptable realities includes the significant ongoing presence of foreign troops on Congolese territory — in some cases against the will of that country's authorities — numerous human rights violations and the growing traffic in and illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The national dialogue, which is to produce a new consensus essential to a lasting solution to the crisis, has yet to begin following the recent felicitous nomination of its Facilitator, former President of Botswana Masire.

I would stress that the failure to respect the timetable attests to the distrust among the parties and compromises its implementation. But how are we to overcome this obstacle if we ourselves remain hesitant? France appeals yet again to the sense of responsibility and spirit of compromise of the parties to the conflict, many of whom I met during my recent travels in Central Africa. France solemnly recalls that the international community can consider offering concrete support for the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, particularly through a peacekeeping operation, only if its signatories clearly demonstrate their will to abide by their commitments and to reconcile their differences. That is what I heard from the African leaders this morning.

But these leaders also expect the States members of the Security Council to commit ourselves to them, first and foremost, by sustained and credible action of the United Nations speedily to strengthen respect for the ceasefire. Without that, no progress can be made on the other aspects of the Agreement. In this respect, we welcome the recommendations made this morning by the Secretary-General, the security aspects of which remain to be fully determined but which will facilitate the actual and verified implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. They also open the door to subsequent United Nations involvement on a larger scale, which we ardently desire and which will help complete and consolidate the peace process once conditions permit, *inter alia*, in terms of security and the fidelity of the parties to their commitments.

President Jacques Chirac has often said that we are ready to support deployment of the operation, be it by despatching Blue Helmets or by equipping certain African contingents participating in it. The deployment of the peacekeeping operation should enable the parties to abide by their commitments to demobilize and reintegrate the former combatants of armed groups. That will occur, however, only if the countries from which the groups originate came undertake to make the necessary reciprocal arrangements to ease their return.

Measures must quickly be taken to end the illegal exploitation of the country's resources. To that end, a panel of experts could be established forthwith under the auspices of the Secretary-General to analyse the situation and propose solutions.

Secondly, we will undertake to help organize the national dialogue. This is not a preliminary to deploying the peacekeeping operation, which clearly cannot wait;

we feel, rather, that it is essential to achieving political agreement among the Congolese, re-establishing state authority throughout the territory and assembling the elements of genuine national consensus, without which the sovereignty, national integrity and democracy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will remain fragile, if not hypothetical. To be credible, the dialogue must proceed along the lines set forth in the Lusaka Agreement and without foreign interference. France welcomes the appointment of President Masire as Facilitator of the national dialogue and assures him of our full support.

Lastly, I would stress the prospects that would be opened up by an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region. It is clearly up to the countries concerned whether or not to hold such a conference. However, we truly believe that if the Ceasefire Agreement were to open the way for such an initiative, such a conference would have a lasting impact. This is simply because such an approach would go to the root of the problems that underlie and have long fed the current conflict.

As the Council knows, France has for a long time suggested the holding of such a conference. The United Nations often talks about it, and I myself have noted that our conviction is now shared by a growing number of leaders who not only want to end this crisis, but who above all want to tackle its root causes. While we all want a return to peace, we must agree that such a peace will not be real or lasting unless there is a comprehensive study of the phenomena that have for so long hampered peace and have led to chain reactions in the region.

It is quite clear to us that the peace processes under way — the Arusha process for Burundi and the Lusaka process for the Democratic Republic of the Congo — are fundamental prerequisites for the holding of such a conference. In other words, the conference cannot be held unless tangible progress is first made in those processes. Such a conference would be the basis for a new commitment by the international community to reconstruction, development and democracy in the countries of the region.

There are three sets of issues that could be addressed. These include the questions of peace and security, which necessarily and obviously touch upon the issue of border control and involve all the parties and the principle of territorial integrity. No less important would be the implementation of measures to restore democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms — first and foremost those of minorities and refugees — as well as doing away with any ideology of exclusion.

Finally, the Great Lakes region of Africa needs to be supported in a major effort of reconstruction and development. The region awaits a manifestation of international solidarity in the struggle against poverty and, thus, for improved social well-being; in favour of trade and, for regional economic integration; and, let us not forget, for the restoration of the basic functions of States in administration, justice and security.

The conference, organized by the OAU with the support of the United Nations, could lead to the adoption of a declaration of principles, to be followed by a series of bilateral and multilateral agreements and partnerships to define the modalities of its implementation.

France is resolutely committed to the Lusaka Agreement, both through the liaison officers it has made available to the United Nations and through the assistance it provides to the Joint Military Commission. We are resolved to support all activities along the lines I have mentioned. We have only one desire: a peace in the region that is solid and lasting, which will require exemplary determination and solidarity. As I said, France stands at the ready.

The President: This completes the ministerial portion of today's important meeting.

The next speaker was supposed to be the United States. I am waiving our turn.

We now begin the rotation of the Security Council members.

Several speakers have already said that they would like to remove themselves from the list of speakers. Anyone who does so is welcome to send us a copy of the text and, as President, I will distribute it immediately to all other members of the Security Council. So I hope that speakers' remarks will be as short as possible.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): About five weeks ago, when the Council held an open debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there appeared to exist different perceptions of the situation and, hence, differing approaches as to the future course of action. It is reassuring for us, listening to the important statements of African leaders before the Security Council today, to note that there now exists a greater potential for

convergence. This opportunity has to be nurtured, pursued in full earnest and given a concrete shape.

The commitment of the leadership to peace and security for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region has been demonstrated today by the representation at the highest level of Lusaka signatories, including the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Salim. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's close involvement deserves our deep appreciation.

In this context, let me say how much we owe to the leadership of the United States, to the personal intervention of Secretary of State Albright and to Ambassador Holbrooke for his tireless endeavour in making this historic meeting happen. His initiative has made our collective intervention for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a realistic proposition.

The last six months have proved that the Lusaka Agreement remains the most pragmatic and practical basis for the resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for peace and security in the Great Lakes region. The deviation from the peace process and the manoeuvres aimed at a military solution are bound to fail. Such a path has instead established an illegal war market, helped a business bonanza flourish and drained valuable resources. It has exacerbated the dire humanitarian and socio-economic condition of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

The message of this gathering of the African leadership at the United Nations appropriately underlines that the next crucial step will require greater understanding, larger cooperation and bolder decisions to seize the opportunity that exists here and now.

President Masire brings statesmanship and influence to the process as the neutral facilitator for the inter-Congolese dialogue. His role is of critical importance. He will have our full support in his efforts for national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We believe he will receive the same support and cooperation from all the parties concerned.

Turning to the future course of action in concrete terms, Bangladesh takes the following position on the five areas of major concern.

The first area of concern is the question of the framework for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We join others in affirming that the Lusaka Agreement remains the most viable basis for peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the subregion. The Agreement is comprehensive. It is supported by the Security Council resolutions that recognize the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and all States in the region. Its implementation will require unwavering political will, sincere commitment and the effective cooperation of all the signatories. The Lusaka mechanisms, notably the Joint Military Commission, have already received commitments of financial support from several countries, which we hope will realize their pledges urgently. Resources for the facilitator's mission are also needed immediately.

Second is the concept of operation and the mandate of the proposed United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ambassador Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has been in the field. Ambassador Holbrooke has also been on a tour of the region recently and has come back with a first-hand assessment of the situation. We believe that in the given context, the outlines provided in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2000/30, of 17 January, represent a realistic proposition. The Security Council needs to act quickly on this proposal so that the United Nations military presence is established without delay. We regard this as an interim mission in preparation for a larger and more robust peacekeeping mission. As and when necessary, Bangladesh remains ready to contribute to the expanded peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Third is the need for progress towards the third phase. A more robust mission with a Chapter VII mandate needs to be considered in due course for the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Lusaka Agreement, including the disarmament and demobilization of armed groups,monitoring and verifying the withdrawal of foreign troops and securing the frontiers.

It is underlined that real progress through these phases would be possible only with concomitant national dialogue and reconciliation. We call upon all parties to cooperate fully with President Masire in this regard. National reconciliation will of course require re-establishment of State authority over the entire

territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and end to the pillaging of the country's natural resources.

Fourth is the full implementation of the Lusaka Agreement and moving beyond. This would involve the implementation of chapter 12 of annex A of the Agreement, providing for normalization of the security situation along common borders between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours. An extended mandate of an expanded United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be envisaged in that perspective.

Finally, as the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been the theatre of several external conflicts involving the Congolese people and their neighbours, a comprehensive political settlement will be essential. In this respect, we support the idea of an international conference to deal with issues relating to peace and security, post-conflict peace-building and democracy and development in the Great Lakes region.

This morning the World Food Programme appealed for safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations to all people in need of food aid and other relief supplies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Given the grave food security situation, we urge the Council and all parties concerned to support this appeal.

We hope the next couple of days will be seized in order to narrow the differences and to commence the much-awaited national dialogue. It would be a significant achievement if the Lusaka signatories could approve here in New York the new calendar agreed by the Political Committee at Harare last week, setting a practical schedule for implementation. This will be critically important for the momentum that is much needed by the international community, including United Nations agencies, to carry forward the initiative for peace. It is essential that a culture of peace should be fostered to replace the culture of war and violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the embattled Great Lakes region, to the benefit of all.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia)(*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to welcome on behalf of Tunisia the heads of State of the African countries and the Ministers participating in this very important meeting. Their presence here expresses the special importance they attach to the issue we are discussing today: the situation in the Great Lakes region, and particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My country, Tunisia, which has made our continent, Africa, one its foreign policy priorities, shares the sense of importance that has been clearly manifested today and that is apparent in the statements of the African leaders this morning and of the heads of delegation before the Council.

I wish to express to you, Mr. President, our appreciation for your friendly country and for your personal efforts in taking the positive initiative of including this issue in this month's series of meetings dealing with African issues.

The issue of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is truly a central issue that has broad dimensions and is related to the situation in the Great Lakes region. The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues, as do tragedies, strife and the exploitation of the resources of the Congolese people, who continue to suffer and also at the expense of the entire region and its security, peace and stability. In this context, we are very concerned at the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has become tragic with the increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons, the lack of food security and the deterioration in health conditions. This situation threatens any attempt to bring about an end to the conflict. We call primarily for more support to be given to the efforts made by United Nations specialized agencies in providing the necessary assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Congolese people.

In this meeting we have heard many valuable statements, in which many African leaders have shown what is being done — within the Organization of African Unity, within the Southern African Development Community or at the personal or individual level, as well as the tireless efforts being made to deal with the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region and to smooth relations between the various parties concerned. These efforts resulted in the signing of the Lusaka Agreement, which has enjoyed great support from the international community, especially from the Security Council, and is aimed at ending tragedy and war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Agreement supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and provides for the security and stability of neighbouring countries, as well as good relations with them. We hope that all parties will sincerely and seriously implement this Agreement.

However, six months following the signing of the Agreement, when the Lusaka mechanism began to

operate, with close cooperation between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, we note that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region generally is still precarious and difficult. There have been repeated violations of the Agreement, which represent a real threat to the future of the Agreement and a return to large-scale war. This is a source of serious concern for us.

We reiterate our position that there is no alternative to a negotiated peaceful settlement between the parties. We call on them to respect the Ceasefire Agreement and to fulfil their commitments. The international community must help them achieve this objective. We must support the Joint Military Commission to enhance its efficiency. Within this framework, the international community must reaffirm the importance of respecting the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as its natural resources.

The United Nations is still focusing on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Secretary-General has prepared a new report (S/2000/30) in which he has proposed gradual measures to be taken by the United Nations to deploy military observers and to send a large-scale peacekeeping mission. However, due to the complexity of the conflict and the vast area of the country, this mission is considered one of the most difficult in United Nations history. Therefore, we must have the necessary political will and must plan carefully for this mission and its mandate, and we must provide the requisite financial and logistical resources.

Tunisia supports these proposals and reaffirms its readiness to participate with its available resources. It calls upon the international community and the donor States to assume responsibility and calls upon all parties to the conflict to cooperate with the mission, to provide unhindered access to its personnel and to accelerate its implementation and success. This is their first responsibility.

We wish to commend the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, particularly through the Joint Military Commission. We commend the support given by some States to provide it with resources. We register great satisfaction over the work of the Political Committee, and we call upon the parties to continue their efforts.

The Security Council has recently been asked to shoulder its responsibility with respect to African issues and to accelerate its pace on those issues. Some have said that the Democratic Republic of the Congo will constitute a test of the Council's commitment; that test is taking place today. The Council must prove its commitment to follow up its previous resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to implement them, and to work quickly to protect the Lusaka Agreement.

As a new member of the Security Council, Tunisia assumes its own role by calling upon the Congolese leadership to make every effort to engage in national dialogue and to achieve national reconciliation. In that context, we welcome the agreement by the Congolese parties on the appointment of the former President of Botswana as neutral facilitator of the political negotiations among those parties. We encourage him in his work, and wish him and our Congolese brothers every success.

Again, we believe that there is no alternative to dialogue, mutual understanding and national reconciliation; were these to exist, the Democratic Republic of the Congo would make great headway towards peace. We call for the provision of assistance to the Congolese parties so that they may begin their dialogue in an atmosphere of independence and seriousness.

We hail the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Kamel Morjane, and the entire United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their intensive efforts to address the conflict in that country. We hope that today's meeting will contribute to the establishment of a dialogue among the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region with a view to reaching a common understanding of what is needed to put an end to the conflict.

The stability, peace and security of the region cannot be achieved overnight; they require time, political will, patience and mutual trust among all the parties, as well as genuine implementation of what has been agreed upon.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is related to the situation in the Great Lakes region and to developments on the other negotiating tracks. We must therefore think of the common, fundamental regional issues that we ought to consider in

a broader framework and to which we must find a comprehensive solution.

Tunisia has for many years followed developments in the Great Lakes region, and has sought to bring about rapprochement in that region; indeed, President Zine El Abidine ben Ali hosted a second summit meeting of leaders of the Great Lakes region in March 1996. Tunisia calls for the convening of an international conference on the Great Lakes region under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The last speaker for today is the representative of Argentina, who will assume the presidency of the Security Council a week from tomorrow.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish at the outset to express our pleasure that heads of State of the African countries concerned with the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been present at this meeting, along with the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Their participation in this debate is an indication that the present conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the greatest potential for destabilization of any since the end of the decolonization process. The persistence of that conflict has an impact on peace and security in the Great Lakes region, limits economic and social development there, and above all thwarts the expectation of the more than 50 million civilians affected by the war that they will be able to live in dignity.

We believe that resolution 1234 (1999), which the Security Council adopted unanimously, and the Lusaka Agreement, which was signed by all the parties, constitute the proper political and legal conceptual framework for putting an end to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But there has not been enough political will to implement its provisions. The ceasefire has been frequently violated since the Agreement was signed in July 1999, and the redeployment of forces stipulated in the Agreement has not taken place. The situation grows increasingly fragile. As the Secretary-General has noted in paragraph 51 of his report, contained in document S/2000/30 of 17 January 2000, there is no military solution to the conflict. The present situation on the ground demonstrates this very clearly.

Unquestionably, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is essentially political in nature. But we believe it cannot be analysed or effectively resolved without consideration of other key principles of international law such as respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, non-interference in its internal affairs, the withdrawal of all foreign forces that are on its territory without its explicit consent, the inalienable right to individual or collective self-defence, and the illegality of the acquisition of territory by force. To these, let me add another principal that has a long history both in Latin America and in Africa: the inviolability of boundaries.

That said, it is clear that there will be no lasting solution unless due account is taken of the legitimate security concerns of all countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular Rwanda and Uganda, and unless a system of explicit and objective guarantees is agreed upon. In that context, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the various militias based mainly in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — generically known as "negative forces" — is an essential and complex element that must be carefully and wisely studied.

In addition to the external dimension to which I have referred, the conflict has an internal dimension to which most other participants have alluded today, and which is recognized in the Lusaka Agreement: the inter-Congolese dialogue with the ultimate goal of establishing a democratic constitutional structure in which all sectors of Congolese society will be represented. Here, the appointment of the former President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, as facilitator, with the assent of all parties, is a first step towards national reconciliation.

We believe that the United Nations has a role to play and a historical responsibility to shoulder in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We agree with the Secretary-General, who said in his recent report that the United Nations presence should come about gradually and that the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be expanded.

At the same time, we wish to be clear on something that is of particular concern to us: all the parties concerned must give firm guarantees of the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel. We know that we cannot demand absolute guarantees; that would place a nearly impossible condition on the deployment of United Nations forces in

a conflict zone. But we require from the parties involved an unambiguous commitment to the ceasefire and to the granting of reasonable security guarantees, something to which all the parties have made a commitment.

Let me repeat today in this open meeting what we have said in the past, and what we reaffirmed on Wednesday 19 January during the debate on the situation in Burundi, in the presence of President Nelson Mandela: there will be no stable solution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo without the promotion and consolidation of democratic institutions and good governance in all the countries of the Great Lakes region, and unless we recognize that the problems there are not solely military in nature or security-related. They are also, and in large part, problems of development. Thus, we repeat again our support for the French idea — eloquently reiterated today by the French Minister Delegate for Cooperation and Francophonie — that, when the proper circumstances exist, a general conference on the Great Lakes should be convened under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to address the situation in that region as a whole.

As you observed, Mr. President, my country will assume the presidency of the Security Council next month. We stand ready to continue to work on this issue with the Council and with other interested States, so that these deliberations may bear fruit in the form of a Security Council resolution that will facilitate the resolution of this tragic conflict.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina, and we look forward to turning the gavel over to him a week from tomorrow — I need some rest.

Several of the speakers inscribed on the list have already notified us that they would like the presidency of the Security Council to circulate their statements in writing. This includes both members of the Security Council and non-members; we will do so as requested. We will meet in informal session tomorrow morning to discuss the presidential statement in draft, at 9 a.m. Our goal will be to move as quickly as possible on it. We welcome the views of all members of the Security Council and other concerned parties through procedures that have already been established for individual input.

This has been, obviously, a remarkable day and a promising day — as the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity said, a momentous day — but the proof of the pudding will be in what we can produce in the way of a presidential statement and, ultimately, a Security Council resolution to respond to the statements made and desires expressed so eloquently by the heads of delegations and Presidents who assembled here today.

I apologize to those who have not had a chance to talk today. We will look forward to learning their views in other forums as quickly as possible, and, if necessary, we will reconvene.

The meeting was suspended at 5.20 p.m.